



200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fact Sheet
87

October 2010

What is professional development?

Teacher professional development can take many forms. It includes graduate studies at colleges and universities, online courses, workshops, conferences, school-based study groups, coaching by peer teachers, induction programs and mentoring for new teachers, participation on school improvement teams, curriculum development committees, and more.

Who is responsible for professional development?

High-quality professional development is a shared responsibility among the teacher participants, providers and the organizational leadership that funds programs, services and activities. Teachers must be actively engaged in both planning and participating in professional development. Providers must plan, design, implement and evaluate their programs to achieve the intended results. Strong leaders recognize the value of high-quality professional learning and take an active role in reviewing and approving each program to ensure that it meets the needs of the participants, demonstrates clear outcomes and is cost effective.

How does Maryland define high quality professional development?

The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards define the vision for high-quality professional development and guide efforts to improve professional development for all teachers. These standards call on teachers, principals, district leaders, the Maryland State Department of Education, institutions of higher education, and cultural institutions and organizations across the state to work together to ensure that professional development is of the highest quality and readily accessible to all teachers. To assist these groups in meeting the standards, the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide, Checklist and Tips and Talking Points Tools were developed.

How do we know if the professional development is effective?

While the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide is critical in designing and implementing high-quality professional development, many providers continue to struggle with how to evaluate their programs or activities. The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide was developed to assist providers and offers strategies to answer the following questions:

1. Did the professional development take place as planned?
2. What were teachers' perceptions of the professional development?
3. Did the professional development achieve the intended outcomes?

How can leaders make critical decisions about professional development funding?

Traditionally it has been difficult to determine how much is spent on professional development because expenses are located in so many programs and sections of budgets. Organizations that provide professional development may use the Teacher Professional Development Spending Analysis Tool to thoroughly collect information on what monies are currently being spent on staff, programs, materials, registration, travel and other expenses. With this information in hand, leaders are better able to make decisions about where monies are being spent and redirect those funds as necessary.

Where can I get additional information?

For additional information, go to www.marylandpublicschools.org and click on the Teacher Professional Development link under the Highlights section or contact the Director of Assessment and Teacher Effectiveness at the Maryland State Department of Education at 410-767-0574.